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COUNTRY : USSR

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (~~SECRET~~) "Some Pressing Problems of Antiair Defense of the Country", by Lieutenant-Colonel Ye. Ryvkin

DATE OF INFO: December 1961

APPRAISAL OF CONTENT : Documentary

SOURCE : A reliable source (B).

Following is a verbatim translation of an article entitled "Some Pressing Problems of Antiair Defense of the Country", by Lieutenant-Colonel Ye. Ryvkin. This article appeared in Issue 6(61) of 1961 of a special version of the Soviet journal Military Thought which is classified SECRET by the Soviets and is published irregularly.

Issue 6(61) was sent to press on 7 December 1961.

Headquarters Comment: Military Thought is published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in three versions, classified RESTRICTED, SECRET, and TOP SECRET. The RESTRICTED version is issued monthly and has existed since 1937. The SECRET version is issued irregularly. By the end of 1961, 61 issues had been published, 6 of them during 1961. The TOP SECRET version was initiated in early 1960 and is also issued irregularly.

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COMMENTS ON A PREVIOUS ARTICLE

"Some Pressing Problems of Antiair
Defense of the Country"

by

Lieutenant-Colonel Ye. Ryvkin

In the article, "Some Pressing Problems of Antiair Defense of the Country"¹, Lieutenant-Colonel N. Melnikov examines one of the most important problems of antiair defense (protivovozdushnaya oborona-PVO) -- the grouping of antiaircraft missile troops (zenitnyye raketnyye voyska-ZRV).

One should agree with the opinion of the author that the point grouping (obyektivaya gruppirovka) of antiaircraft missile troops does not answer the growing problems of antiair defense. It is also true that a perimeter single echelon defense (krugovaya odnoeshelonnaya oborona) of an objective with antiaircraft missiles does not guarantee its safety from air strikes, because aviation now has the capability of breaking through the ZRV zone, using various methods to overcome antiair defense. Furthermore, as strategic bombers become armed with guided missiles, it becomes senseless to have the ZRV grouping located near the probable line of bombardment around the objectives. Therefore, Lieutenant-Colonel Melnikov suggests that the ZRV units be relieved from screening individual isolated rear area objectives, and be used for screening the entire territory of the country by forming a ZRV grouping in one or two echelons along the country's border. The author gives simple calculations on the economic advantages of such a re-organization.

In our opinion, however, the ZRV grouping proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel N. Melnikov will not ensure reliable antiair defense of the country.

1. Collection of Articles of the Journal, "Military Thought", No. 1(56), 1961

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The fact is that the enemy, having discovered the ZRV border grouping, will unquestionably succeed in breaking through temporarily at a predetermined sector by using massed nuclear/missile strikes and concentrated radar jamming. After this, the enemy's strategic and tactical aviation, as well as his cruise missiles, can penetrate through this breach. After breaking through the ZRV border zone, the means of aerial attack will be able to bomb, unimpeded, the unprotected objectives in the zone of interior.

It is true that Lieutenant-Colonel N. Melnikov feels that, in order to screen individual objectives located outside the boundaries of the screened territory, as well as important centers (Moscow, Leningrad, and others), there will be need of additional ZRV means. This would mean, however, that other objectives of great importance to the national economy and defense would be left without supplementary screening, and would therefore be defenseless.

Taking into consideration the possibility of such consequences, Marshal of the Soviet Union S. Biryuzov expresses a different point of view¹. In his article "The Role and Tasks of the Antiair Defense Troops of the Country in Modern Warfare and Prospects for Their Development in the Near Future", he maintains that only by setting up systems of long-range anti-aircraft missiles (ZUR DD) will it be possible to switch from the screening of individual objectives to the organization of zonal defense of those very important regions which represent the basis of the military-economic potential of the country.

We are in complete agreement with this point of view and assume that the borders of such regions do not necessarily have to coincide with the country's borders, and that, unlike Lieutenant-Colonel N. Melnikov's thinking, desert and sparsely populated areas will be excluded. The borders of the areas will be defined as a result of a thorough study of the nature and prospects for development of a given area as an industrial-economic center. Under no circumstances must we neglect to screen objectives in the interior of the country by systems of short-range anti-aircraft missiles (ZUR BD).

1. Collection of Articles of the Journal "PVO News", No.4(12), 1960.

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Thus, in our opinion, the future groupings of the anti-aircraft missile PVO Troops of the Country may consist of "zonal" ("zonalnyy") or "boundary" ("rubezhnyy") groupings, organized to screen the approaches to vital industrial regions with systems of long-range anti-aircraft missiles, and of "point" groupings, organized to screen important objectives in the interior of the country with systems of short-range anti-aircraft missiles.

Anti-aircraft missile systems for low-altitude (malovysotnyy) targets (ZUR MV), in our opinion, should be used by both types of groupings.